

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 11, 2014

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

We write again regarding the construction of the new stand-alone U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs replacement medical center in Aurora, Colorado. We remain concerned about cost disputes between the VA and the prime contractor Kiewit Turner Joint Venture (KT) on this critical project. On behalf of veterans across the Rocky Mountain region, we ask for your direct involvement to ensure construction of this hospital is completed on time and at the best value to our taxpayers. As you know, this medical center fulfills a long promise made to our veterans, and it is critical we work to fulfill that promise.

We strongly feel the project would immediately benefit from insights provided by independent, external experts regarding the VA's construction policies and procedures going forward. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has decades of technical and managerial experience in hospital construction, as well as a remarkable track record for completing major construction projects on time and on budget. Therefore, we urge the VA to enter into an Interagency Agreement as soon as practicable to allow USACE to conduct a Design-Construction Evaluation (DCE) on this project. This evaluation is a common practice to provide the VA with a full review of the procurement, engineering, construction and project management processes to identify problems and recommend solutions the VA can implement. USACE regularly completes DCEs on its own projects at major milestones or when potential funding or schedule delays arise.

Additionally, USACE has also worked with other federal agencies on a number of occasions to conduct evaluations on their construction practices to improve project management and timely project completion. The VA has a strong history of collaboration with USACE on construction projects, and we are pleased to hear discussions are ongoing for the use of these DCEs on major construction projects, including the Aurora medical center. Completely separate from the ongoing contract dispute, a DCE on the Aurora project will allow for a forward look to plan and assist in completion of this medical center.

Our veterans deserve the best hospital possible built at the best price as quickly as possible. They should not be forced to wait even a day longer than necessary for the timely, world-class care this hospital will provide. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has the expertise to assist the

to assist the VA in fulfilling this promise to Rocky Mountain veterans, and we urge you in the strongest terms possible to take immediate advantage of that expertise.

We look forward to continuing our work with you and the VA to ensure timely completion of this hospital, and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mark Udall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Mark Udall
U.S. Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Michael Bennet". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Michael Bennet
U.S. Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Ed Perlmutter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress